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For the Year 1886

Place of Sittings and P. O. Address of Clerks.	Clerks.	Jan.	Mar.	May.	July.	Sep.	Nov.	Hour of Opening
Milton..... R	Wm. Panton.	23	26	28	9	24	26	10 a.m.
Oakville..... R	R. Balmer....	6	3	5	3	11	3	10 a.m.
Georgetown.....	L. Grant.....	12	16	11	7	17	9	9 a.m.
Acton.....	J. Matthews..	13	11	13	8	16	11	10 a.m.
Campbellville.....	W. R. Davis..	4	1	1	10	0	9	9 a.m.
Burlington.....	J. W. Bastedo	5	2	4	2	10	2	11 a.m.

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, with or without Jury, Tuesday 8th June, 11th November, 10 a.m.
County Court Sittings, without Jury, Tuesday, 6th April, and 5th October, at 10 a.m.
County Court Sittings—Formerly Terms—Monday, 4th January, 5th April, 5th July, and 4th October at 10 a.m.
Judge's Chambers—Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week, except on Court days and during vacation, at 11 a.m.
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VANITY HARDWARE.

By ALAN MUIR.

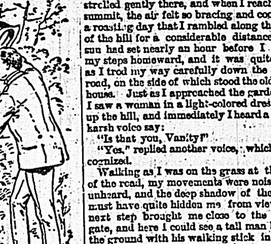
Where have I got to?—Vanity, I was on the point of saying, led Willie on. On a particular evening in June, Willie pursued his upward way, coming to a turn of the road where on either side ran tall hedges, pink and white with flowers, that made the sunset air sweet like honey from their thousand breathing blossoms. Who should he see here but Miss Hardware. Of course she did not know he was near, innocent girl! She was trying might and main to catch at a spray of wild rose that hung temptingly out on high just beyond her reach. What an opening for Willie! Yet, easy as it was, so did he reverence his ideal of this woman that he thought it presumptuous to offer her help. But he plucked up courage.

"Can I—can I—do that for you?"

She turned round, her face bright with surprise and pleasure.

"Thank you. I do so wish for that particular rose."

If the spray had been twenty-five feet above his head, mark you, Willie would have secured it. In a moment he held the rose out to her, neatly trimmed by his ready



In a moment he held the rose out to her.

pocket knife. She took it gracefully, and seemed quite ready for a conversation; but poor Will felt he had done wonders already.

"Good evening," said he, passing on.

"Good by," said she gayly. "Looks pretty, does it not?"

Looping the spray round her rustic hat with skillful fingers, she stood before him, one arm raised over her head statue-like, while love and laughter played over her face.

"Beautiful, isn't it?"

"Wonderfully beautiful," replied Willie, in a low earnest voice, and with such a sight Then he walked on, intoxicated.

Golden was the June that year. Long, sunlit days passed into warm, cloudless evenings and breathless, brilliant, starry nights. Willie became more regular than ever in his up-hill walks. Nor did Vanity give him any rebuff. Somehow she managed to meet him constantly at one particular spot where tall trees shaded the road, and from which the distant landscape could be seen in perfect beauty. The first time they met after the rose-incident interview she dropped him an easy, familiar nod, which he returned in the shape of a respectful salute, hat in air, and best Sunday manners. So that evening passed.

Again they met, and she stopped to speak with him, saying a few light nothings; while he was all diffidence and "yes" and "no." She shot a smile and went on, laughing in her sleeve, no doubt, at his shortsliness. And yet his look—his clear, honorable eyes—ought to have touched her somewhere; but I suppose it was not in her to know that deep, pure love—love that was like a sensitive plant—made this brave, manly fellow shy as a girl when she was near. Frivolous and Frenchified as she was, Vanity could not read his behavior aright; yet possibly his character was printing itself on her mind all the time, especially, as the hour of interpretation drew nearer. Anyhow, she amused herself with him; and amusement must have been a rare thing in her dreary life, poor soul! Vanity was clear to my mind: Willie did not know at out his sweetheart all that was necessary to be known by a lover. I resolved to start him on the track of inquiry; and it happened, curiously enough, that room after he came to me to talk over his love affairs, which had come to a crisis.

In his interviews with Vanity he had now plainly betrayed the lover, in spite of the shyness that always hung over him in her presence. In return she interspersed the flippant gayety of her manner with little snatches of seriousness, just enough to encourage him in thinking that her heart was touched. Had her conduct wanted these little strokes, the spell by which she bound him must surely have melted away. For as she grew more familiar her free and easy style of talking became more marked, and even Willie—lover though he was—started sometimes at her sallies. Vanity seemed color-blind, so to speak, as to ordinary distinctions between propriety and impropriety. He tried to reassure himself by recalling all he had ever read or heard about prudes being at heart less virtuous than flirts, and declared to me that "The Merry Wives of Windsor" taught a memorable lesson in this particular. Still, when all had been said, Vanity's behavior remained a source of misgiving. He was often on the point of breaking loose; but one drop of her long-lashed eyes, or a soft word from her fine metallic voice, would scatter his doubts to the winds, and restore his wavering allegiance.

They had arranged a new meeting place—a little swinging gate, which you may see even now, standing at the corner of the plantation. So far they kept up a pretense of accident in these encounters, for Willie thought it indelicate to hint at anything like an appointment with a woman who had not yet accepted him as a lover. Respectable behavior was born in that dear boy! But accidentally, on purpose, they met; and sunset after sunset found them at this swinging gate, ready to stroll off different ways, if need arose. At last, one Saturday night, Willie resolved to speak his mind. Vanity was leaning upon the gate, swinging herself to and fro at times, or flitting her white finger tips into the blossoms of a long stalk of fragrant clover, which she had plucked as she walked. A painter might have chosen her as a model of a temptress. Well she knew her power over the artless, manly young fellow at her side.

Willie was not inclined to talk; for, with a beating heart, he was planning how to open his declaration of love. The sunlight, as it sank, tipped the tree-tops with gold, and far below, a mist was stealing up the great valley. The butterflies had vanished long ago, and now and then a beetle went by on whirring wings; the brooklet ran away from beside them, and wound and bubbled across the field. Nature and Love had the scene all to themselves.

"Vanity!" said Willie, at last. He had always called her "Miss Hardware" until now, and felt that this was a great stride to make in a breath. So he said it again, like a man going to turn his bridge, "Vanity!"

"Miss Vanity showed not the least surprise, and gave no sign of pleasure or displeasure.

"What is it?" she asked, studying the pink thimble of forglove on her forefinger with the most alluring carelessness. "Have you any news to tell me?"

"What a white hand!" cried Willie, feeling more kittish all of a sudden. "A pretty little—white—hand!"

Gasping for breath—so he told me himself.

"There are no rings to set it off," Vanity said, looking at her hand with a pout. Then her face rippled into a smile and a laugh.

"The flowers look pretty while they last, don't they?" She dallied with the half-dismantled stem—a witch, if ever woman was. Willie, trembling all over, resolved to cross the bridge and burn it.

"Cover your hand with diamonds, cover it until every finger carries a fortune," he cried, "and the hand would not look so beautiful as now, or be so dear."

Vanity smiled, pleased with his compliment, it seemed, not the least flustered! Oh, used to having her fingers toyed with, be sure of that!

Willie grew bolder; he caught her hand in his.

"Vanity, dear Vanity!"

"Yes," she said. "What have you got to say to Vanity—dear Vanity?"

She raised her eyes, so that the last beam of sunlight touched them and irradiated their dangerous brilliancy.

"May I—may I?" Willie trembled at his own daring, yet he lifted the hand to his lips while he thus asked leave to kiss it.

Vanity burst out laughing.

"May I—may I! Of course you may!" she cried. "Dear timid lad! Look here!"

Light as a flying bird, and as graceful, she touched his cheek with her lips, skimming away after a pressure which would have scarcely hurt a butterfly's wing. But her breath was on him, and her brilliant, laughing eyes were sparkling close to his. Delight—delight with pain in it—shot through Willie's heart. He had no time to search out his own feelings, however, for an unexpected interruption diverted his thoughts.

"Can I pass now?" demanded an imperious voice behind him, with marked emphasis.

"If it will not be inconvenient."

Willie looked round. There stood Nancy Steele! Neither of the lovers had noticed her approach, for she had a light, swift step, and glided over the ground quickly.

"Is that you, Willie?" said Nancy, speaking now in her most agreeable voice. "I did not see your face. What a pleasant evening!"

So she passed by, showing to him no vexation whatever, nor even manifesting any curiosity; for, without a glance at Vanity, she went on homeward, quick, active, nimble-footed, the very image of a thrifty, managing young woman.

"Who is that?" Vanity asked, disdainfully. "Where does she come from? At least, where did her bonnet come from?"

"She is only a girl I know," Willie replied, hardly able to speak for confusion. "Nothing more, I assure you."

"Only a girl you know, repeated Vanity. "Something more, I think—a girl that knows you. What right had she to watch us?"

"Perhaps she was not watching," Willie stammered. "Perhaps she did not see anything."

"Perhaps she has not sight nor hearing," said Vanity, who had read Nancy's face with a rival's eye. "Perhaps she was pleased with what she saw. In fact, she looked perfectly charmed."

Courting was over for that evening. Willie felt dashed by the sudden appearance of Nancy, and other thoughts troubled him. Vanity, too, assumed an expression new with her—half angry, half reflective; and there was a coldness in their parting such as might have signified that their commencing tenderness was ready to vanish. The sun had sunk behind the west, leaving the spot cold and gray, like life when love is gone.

What thoughts were in Miss Vanity's mind I cannot conjecture. As for Master Will, I know he went down hill hanging his head, repulsed, baffled, foolish, ready to abandon this pretty, rakish Vanity, ask Nancy's forgiveness, marry her, and live like a respectable man.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH WILLIE REFLECTS, I REMONSTRATE AND VANITY WEEPS.

Heavy was Willie's heart that night. He was ashamed of himself, and dreaded the thought of meeting Nancy Steele, nor did the uncertainty he felt as to how much she had overheard diminish his disquiet. Besides, he could not extinguish a certain misgiving about Vanity. The honey of her kiss hid a sting which rankled now, when the sweetness had passed off. Willie thought—as any steady, respectable young man might think—that, had the kiss been of his taking, not of her giving, it would have been honey indeed, and never a sting behind. Had he stolen a kiss, and had she, after a little decent show of anger, allowed him to beg forgiveness, all would have been well. Because, though we do not wish to look too much behind the scenes, we all know this is the way well-conducted young people make love. So Willie thought over matters, and was troubled with his thoughts. He would not use the word about Vanity himself, but the thought crossed his mind, "May not Nancy think her bold?" Then came a second question, "Would not Nancy have some reason for thinking her bold?" which last query fixed itself in Master Will's head and gave him an uneasy pillow.

Events hurried Willie forward. Next morning, when on his way to his place of business, he saw Nancy at a distance coming toward him. "Now for it," said Will to himself, making ready for a gale. But he was wrong; Nancy came on smiling, and held her hand out in a friendly way.

"Good-morning, Willie."

"Good-morning, Miss Nancy."

"Was your Cousin Alice I saw with you last night, I suppose?" said Nancy, with a face of perfect gayety.

Willie's "Cousin Alice" lived in Norwich, and was known in Hampton by name only.

"Certainly not," Willie replied. "What made you think of her?"

The lad began to recover himself, hoping that nothing material had been overseen.

"I felt certain she must be a near relation when I saw her kissing you—her kissing you!" Nancy said emphatically, hitting the nail of Willie's thought a most decisive blow with the hammer of her clever tongue. Then she went on: "How many such kissing acquaintances have you got, Willie?"

Nancy laughed good-naturedly enough.

"Well, you see, Nancy—" Willie began.

"I saw," said Nancy, laughing still. "I had rather not have seen it, Willie." Now she looked sad. "Never mind," she cried, with a smile and a sigh: "I tell no tales."

She nodded to him and hurried on. I have observe, once for all, that Miss Nancy may have been a little sharp, but she was quite right to stand up for propriety, quite right to let Willie know that Vanity's behavior had been forward; quite right to give Willie a sign of her good temper, and yet drop a hint of wounded feelings. I do not care who hears me say it—for a motherless girl Nancy showed remarkable discretion.

That night Willie came to me and laid the whole case before me.

"Tell me candidly, doctor," he said, "what I ought to do."

"You ought never to speak to Miss Vanity Hardware again," I replied, "nor see her, if you can help it."

"But she may be good."

"And the moon may be green cheese, Will. How many 'mays' go to a 'must?'"

"You are hard-hearted, doctor."

"Gray-headed, you mean, Willie."

That silenced him for a whole minute.

"I have a suspicion that this Miss Vanity Hardware has a secret to keep," said I, resolved to tell him all I knew. "Have you ever seen a wedding-ring on her finger?"

"What?" cried Willie, leaping up as if a bullet had gone through him.

"Have you ever seen a wedding-ring on her finger?" I repeated, looking at the lad steadily, with the air of one who knew a great deal. And, to be sure, I knew more than he did.

"A wedding-ring!" he gasped. "Certainly not. What do you mean?"

"I believe your sweetheart, Miss Vanity Hardware, is a married woman," I went on. "Mrs. Vanity Somebody, as sure as my name is John Book. Don't hold up your hand, Will, nor lift your voice, nor speak one word. I have seen that woman's husband!"

Willie never had much color in his cheeks, but he turned whiter than I could have believed possible. Poor boy! he was in love indeed, and I pitied him. Still, feeling it to be my duty, I related to him the scene I had witnessed a few evenings before.

"It is surprising—very surprising," said he, like a man trying to disbelieve what he knows must be true. "But this stranger may not be her husband after all, doctor."

"Quite true; he may not be a husband; *let us hope he is*," I replied, determined to give him my whole mind. Oh, Will, Will, there are none so blind as those——"

"Anyway," cried Willie, snatching up his hat, "I shall know who and what that man is before yonder clock strikes nine!"

"You are going to see the young woman, are you?"

"Of course I am."

"She will make a fool of you, Willie. She was born to deceive hearts like yours."

But Willie was gone, and I spoke to the air.

Up-hill he hastened with a beating heart. Somehow, as he drew nearer to the spot where he and Vanity used to meet on their evening rambles the girl seemed to renew her enchantments. Over fine-strung natures like his, those first timid beginnings of courtship have a peculiar influence—when nothing is said, but the message of love is carried silently from one to another on the wings of a blush or a glance. Willie loved Vanity more earnestly because his love had found only small outlets. And now the brook, the trees, the flowers, the sunset, and sweet-smelling air, all filled his mind with tender thoughts of the beautiful woman, with whom they were by habit associated. Vanity might be light in her manner; she might be in some position of unknown difficulty; but she was honorable—he assured himself of that—and her love was yet to be won. If she had any deep hidden trouble, he would be her friend and comforter! He was pondering that question in a kind of warm transport, when he raised his eyes and saw Vanity standing before him.

She held out her hand.

"I am glad to see you this evening," she said, with a serious air he had never noticed in her before. "Thank God you are here, Willie!"

Why, her very tones were tremulous with feeling! Her dark eyes were humid—not with love. What was Willie but mortal man—a mortal man in his twenty-second year! If there lingered any coldness in his feelings, her manner thawed it away. She looked his own ideal of herself now—grave, sweet, and, in his eyes, more beautiful than a dream. Love came in like a flood. The mysterious stranger—her frivolous ways—his own misgivings—were quenched in a moment.

"Why are you glad?" he asked, feeling that he was treading on the verge of the most delicious moment of his life, and holding back in very fear of the joy at hand.

"I have something to say to you, Willie," she murmured. "Something very serious."

Her voice was not the voice of love. Sad, timorous, full of foreboding, intimating a dark, uncertain future. Willie stopped her.

"And I have something to say to you! Let me speak first!"

She raised her eyes, and read in his face what was coming. For a moment she seemed irresolute, not knowing whether to speak or be silent, and he seized his opportunity. He drew her to his side, and in a few low words told her how much he loved her. A dozen set-speeches, carefully prepared beforehand, were in his mind, and he forgot every word. What he said he scarcely knew, but a story such as he is telling is not likely to touch a woman less because of broken sentences. She saw the light that shone in his clear eyes, and the flush, the sign of a noble modesty, that rose on his cheek. He was bending over her, looking at her with an earnest, passionate face, so real, so true, so manly in its gentleness, that, unless she was unnatural, she could not but have been moved.

And yet she stood with parted lips, and an expression which reflected at once responding passion and yet an anxious sorrow. His whole soul was in the speech. She was his ideal. The little spot where he stood was his universe. But in her eyes there was a look of deep thought—a preoccupation—which showed that some remote interest, claim or authority divided her mind and forced her to keep herself in reserve. Willie, however, did not interpret her manner. He saw she listened to him with pleasure, and that was enough. Such was his way of telling the story to me.

"I am beginning life with good prospects, Vanity," he said. "If you allow me, I can offer you a home to-morrow. My salary is two hundred a year, and I have of my own nearly a hundred more. Besides, I am sure to rise in the business, and some day I shall be a partner. I never took much pleasure in this before, because I never was in love; but now every advantage I possess is precious, because it may recommend me to you. I love you heart and soul, Vanity, and will love you forever, if you give me leave. What do you say?"

She looked at him, greatly moved, but with an excitement which she struggled to repress—an excitement that was no part of love.

TO BE CONTINUED.

An April Shower.

The first of the Plate Engravings illustrating the Homes of our Farmer Presidents, which the American Agriculturist is preparing at great expense, will appear as a supplement to the May number. It represents the Home Farm and Rural surroundings of Jefferson. The accompanying description is by James Parton. The others will follow in succession. These Special Engravings by the first American Artists, and Special Descriptions by the most eminent of living American Authors, are furnished free to all subscribers. The price of the American Agriculturist is $1.50 a year. We will club with the CHAMPION at $2.15. Inasmuch as every number is complete, subscriptions can begin at any time. Send to 751 Broadway, New York, for any further particulars required regarding Paper and Engravings. Direct to David W. Judd, Publisher.

Bad News About Fall Wheat.

Toronto Globe.

A gentleman who has just made a business trip through Wentworth, Brant, Haldimand, and adjoining counties, and who has an intimate acquaintance with farming, reports the wheat crop in an unsatisfactory condition. Some localities where the conditions are favorable, the roots are all preserved, but the heavy soil, where surface or tile draining did not remove the surplus water, the effect of the accumulation of ice has been most destructive. Under the most favorable circumstances the crop he says cannot possibly go up to the average.

Saturday was Bismarck's 71st birthday.

More massacres of Catholic are reported from Annam.

Extensive preparations for war are being made in England.

ESQUESING COUNCIL.

The Council met on notice from the Reeve. Members all present. The Reeve in the chair.

The minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

A petition from the trustees and ratepayers of Union S. S. "A" No. 2, Chinguacousy.

A letter from the clerk of the Township of Chinguacousy, relating to Union S. S. No. "A."

A letter from the public school Inspector for the County of Peel, relating to Union S. S. No. 7, (Norval.)

Also several accounts were presented and read.

Moved by Dr. Webster, seconded by Mr. Graham, that the Treasurer pay to R. J. Whaley the sum of $5.85 being two-thirds value of one sheep killed by dogs.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Warren, seconded by Mr. Williams, that the report of the Auditors of the Treasurer's accounts be received and that the Council go into committee of the whole to re-audit the accounts, with Mr. Williams in the chair.—Carried.

The Council in committee of the whole; Mr. Williams in the chair.

The Council resumed. The Reeve in the chair. Mr. Reeve, your committee of the whole Council appointed to audit the Treasurer's accounts beg leave to report that having examined the accounts and the Auditor's report, they found them correct and satisfactory, and recommend that the Council do pass the same, and have two hundred and fifty copies printed for distribution.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Graham, that the report of the committee appointed to audit the accounts be adopted.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Warren, that the treasurer pay to J. H. James the sum of twenty dollars to be applied for the support of Robert Cook, he being and in poor circumstances.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mr. Williams, that lots 6 and 7 in Block 11 be refunded to E. Hemphill, the owner having removed from the municipality.—Carried.

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